

THE SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting was held at the County Museum on the 29th April 1972. There were no changes amongst the officers and Council of the Society.

OUTINGS IN 1972

- 29th April. Brill and Chilton.
27th May. Steeple Ashton and Edington churches and Stourhead House and grounds, Wiltshire.
8th July. Harefield Church, Middlesex, Savoy Manor, Denham Place, church and village.
22nd July. Bucks Churches. Willen, Sherington, Olney, Hanslope, Gayhurst and Great Linford.
5th Aug. Fishbourne Roman Palace, Chichester Cathedral and Goodwood House, Sussex.
2nd Sept. Chiltern Walk along the 'Black Hedge' at Princes Risborough and to various Natural History sites.

We were indebted to Mr. B. de Burgh Sidley who organised the Brill and Chilton afternoon, Mr. F. Cakebread who invited us to Savoy Manor, and Mr. A. J. H. Baines and Mrs. Susan Cowdy who led the Chiltern walk.

On 22nd July there was an additional attraction when those present attended the opening, by the Lord Lieutenant, of Cowper's Alcove at Weston Underwood which had been restored by the County Council. E.V.

MUNIMENT ROOM

The Hon. Archivist reports the following accessions, in addition to the Moleyns Inventory described on pp. 194 ff. of this number:—

Feoffment by Margery widow of William de Leye to Joan her daughter of all her land in Edgcott. 3 May 1277. Phillipps 36281.

Feoffment by Richard Edenet and others to John, son of Roger Lestrangle, of Knockin, Salop, and Matilda his wife of two watermills under one roof at Denham. 20 Feb 1394. Phillipps 35599.

Counterpart of notification by Thomas Englefield to the Abbot of Missenden relating to the presentation of a chaplain to the vacant living of Shiplake, Oxon. 6 May 1527. Abbey seal: Virgin and Child. Phillipps 31954.

These deeds were bought at Sothebys in June, 1936, and presented anonymously to the Society. E.M.E.

NATURAL HISTORY SECTION

In 1972 the survey on the Black Hedge, part of the ancient boundary of Monks Risborough, was completed. With the help of Mr. A. H. J. Baines, who provided the historical background, the Natural History Section was able to establish that this hedge existed in Anglo-Saxon times. An explanatory chart of the hedge, a map and photographs were included in an exhibition of "Recent Research in Natural History of Buckinghamshire" held at the County Museum in May. In the coming year it is intended to continue the survey, this time in the Waldridge area.

During the course of the year there were nine meetings and two weekend courses at Missenden Abbey—

15th January 1972. "History in Stone and Flowers", an illustrated talk on the architecture of churches by Mr. L. Blake, and "Flowers of the churchyards" by Mrs. R. Blake.

12th February. Mr. A. Faithful from Marsworth showed a film of the life cycle of the Emperor Moth and Mr. Aubrey Woodward gave a short talk on how the Emperor Moth was reintroduced into the county.

18th March. Mrs. P. Cunningham talked about the Island of Texel.

29th April. The visit to Velvet Lawn had to be abandoned because of bad weather.

14th May. A visit to Monkton Wood was led by Miss Phyllis Gardiner.

9th-11th June. An ornithological weekend entitled "Birds of Scotland" was held at Missenden Abbey.

16th July. A field outing to Shardeloes Lake followed by a walk to Mop End, was led by Miss Dorothy Eyre.

20th August. An outing to beech woods at Crowell was led by Mrs. Rosemary Blake.

29th September-1st October. A weekend course on mycology was held at Missenden Abbey.

4th November. Mr. Victor Scott gave an illustrated talk on aquatic flora.

9th December. "British botanists from the 17th century onwards", a talk given by Miss Molly Hyde.

The following notes on mammals have been received—

Mrs. Susan Cowdy reports that there has been an increase in the number of fallow deer (*Dama dama*) in woodlands in the Oakley area and along the borders of Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.

Otters (*Lutra lutra*) have been reported from three areas only and there has been a decrease in the bat population.

From Miss Phyllis Gardiner comes the report that daylight sightings of muntjak (*Muntiacus muntjak*) in the Chilterns have been increasing considerably over the last two years.

Mr. Killingley, Organiser of the National Badger Survey, has provided information that in 1972 there was virtually no change in conditions of the badger (*Meles meles*) in this county—his article covering the previous ten years appears in this edition of "Records". It is sad to learn that gassing, which is illegal, still occurs on occasions also that "digging out" for badger pelts and cubs for sale is believed to go on, though in this county the badger does not suffer the persecution it does in many other counties.

From Mr. Brian Walbank has come a report on recent damage done by the grey squirrel (*Neosciurus carolinensis*). This followed its normal course when 10-20 year old beech trees and sycamore saplings were attacked—these trees are the most susceptible to damage. At the end of 1971 there were signs of an increase in the squirrel population in parts of the Chilterns and it was predicted that a climax would be reached in 1972. This in fact has happened and numbers are now declining.

The Public Health Department of Amersham Rural District Council states that the edible dormouse (*Glis glis*) has been found as widely distributed as Chesham, Chalfont St. Giles, Beaconsfield, Penn, Little Missenden, Prestwood and Hampden. In 1972 the Council had to destroy 32. In the past householders would suffer disturbance between the months of May and September or as late as October; now it seems that the edible dormouse does not hibernate in the true sense at all. Possibly this could be due to the introduction of central heating into so many houses.

The following report has come from the county bird recorder, Mr. R. E. Youngman. Among the interesting species of birds recorded in the county during the year were the following:

All three of the commoner species of British Divers, Blackthroated at Bletchley in March, Great Northern at Lindford and Red-throated at Wraysbury both in November.

Black-necked and Slavonian Grebes were noted at the usual autumn and spring passage times but a full plumaged adult Slavonian seen at Weston Turville Reservoir in May was unusual for its lateness.

The 1971 Marlow Ring-necked Duck stayed until March and spent the summer elsewhere presumably with the Tufted Ducks with which it associated. It returned once more in December. It is interesting that no female of this species has ever been observed in the British Isles.

Black Redstarts, although they have in the past bred in the County, are not often recorded but one was seen at Latimer Park near Chesham in February.

A Little Gull was seen at Horton in March and others were noted at Foxcote reservoir in the autumn. This species is becoming increasingly common in the county.

Firecrest numbers near Wendover increased from 2 known pairs in 1971 to in excess of 20 pairs probably breeding in 1972. The real increase is, one supposes, unknown as these figures presumably indicate the greater amount of observations made during the second year. Firecrests were recorded at other localities and in neighbouring counties.

From mid-June onwards Crossbills were noted mainly in the coniferous woodlands in the south of the county. Irruptions of this species from Europe occur periodically. This was the first for some years.

The most interesting vagrant of the year was a Pomarine Skua seen at Wraysbury in November. On one occasion it was seen to kill and eat a Black-headed Gull. This species is normally pelagic in winter and is very rare in Buckinghamshire.

Great Grey Shrike in January, Golden Oriole in May and Glaucous Gull in December added ornithological spice to a generally interesting year.

Plants of special interest—

In Druce's List of British Plants (1908) he gives the Military Orchid (*Orchis militaris*) as found in seven vice-counties in England but for many years now it has been known in two sites only, one of them in Buckinghamshire. In 1971 a second site was recorded in this county.

Goats Rue (*Galega officinalis*) was known some years ago in Princes Risborough; it has now been found in the Whiteleaf area.

Cut-leaved Elder (*Sambucus laciniata*) is an occasional garden escape and has been found on the edge of a wood in Great Kingshill.

Dotted Loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctata*) has been found growing in a small woodland marsh near Prestwood.

Some plants rare to this county have been recorded by Mr. Peter Knipe who is preparing a new Flora of Buckinghamshire—

Meadow Clary	<i>Salvia pratensis</i>
Marsh Helleborine	<i>Epipactis palustris</i>
Bog Pimpernel	<i>Anagallis tenella</i>
Marsh Valerian	<i>Valeriana dioica</i>
Blunt-flowered Rush	<i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>
Broad Blysmus	<i>Blysmus compressus</i>
Brown Sedge	<i>Carex disticha</i>
Carnation Grass	<i>C. panicea</i>
Marsh Arrow-grass	<i>Triglochin palustris</i>
Purple Moor-grass	<i>Molinia caerulea</i>

J.E.

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